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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/29/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [BO](#)
SUBJECT: PARTNERSHIP NGO RELEASES FINAL ELECTION
OBSERVATION REPORT

REF: A. MINSK 183
[1](#)B. MINSK 132
[1](#)C. 05 MINSK 1437
[1](#)D. MINSK 192

Classified By: AMBASSADOR GEORGE KROL FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: With its leaders currently in prison, election monitoring NGO Partnership anonymously sent via email its final election observation report. Although much shorter and less analytical than the earlier ones, this report declared that the Belarusian presidential elections were not democratic and described several violations witnessed by the few individuals who were permitted to observe early voting, voting on Election Day and the vote count on March 19. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Although recent amendments to the criminal code make it prohibitively dangerous to report any information that may discredit Belarus (ref C), election monitoring NGO Partnership anonymously emailed its final election observation report to its newsletter subscribers. (Note: Partnership's leaders, including Nikolai Astreiko and Enira Bronitskaya, were arrested on February 21 and currently face criminal charges for running an organization that violates the rights of Belarusian citizens (ref D).) The report declared that the Belarusian March 19 presidential elections were not democratic.

[1](#)3. (C) The report detailed several examples of election violations, including Milinkevich supporters campaigning on Election Day in Rechiza and pro-Lukashenko posters at polling stations. Partnership reported that on Election Day in Rohachev, five observers were arrested after police visited area polling stations to evaluate the observers and to detain those who were "unwelcome." In Nesvizh, observers reported that ballots were distributed to voters without proper identification verification while electoral commission members filled out the ballots for hospital staff and patients in Slutsk. In Gomel, Partnership observers reported that the territorial commission head sent observers home before proceeding to another location to count the ballots without observers present.

[1](#)4. (C) In the report, Partnership expressed its regret that, due to the authorities' use of intimidation, threats and arrests, Partnership was only able to field 500 observers out of the 3,500 that it originally recruited. Partnership

reported that many of its observers were expelled from polling stations, detained or arrested once they were identified as Partnership activists.

Comment

[¶5.](#) (C) Partnership's final report, like the previous reports, was sent anonymously. While it managed to highlight several examples of election violations, the report lacked the analysis, insight, and detail Partnership had in its coverage of the 2004 referendum/Parliamentary elections. This, no doubt, is a result of the NGO's leadership being held in BKGB detention.

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